

cies which must appeal to the American people and which were necessary to the happiness and prosperity of the country; that in making the request the authors of the letter were not considering his personal interests, but the interests of the people as a whole, and that if he were to decline he would show himself unresponsive to a plain public duty.

Two days after the date of this letter, February 12, 1912, President Taft made a speech before the Republican Club in New York City in which he said:

" There are those who look upon the present situation as one full of evil and corruption and as a tyranny of concentrated wealth, and who in apparent despair at any ordinary-remedy are seeking to pull down those things which have been regarded as the pillars of the temple of freedom and representative government and to reconstruct our whole society on some new principle, not definitely formulated and with no intelligent or intelligible forecast of the exact constitutional and statutory results to be obtained. Such extremists would hurry us into a condition which would find no parallel except in the French Eevolution or in that babbling anarchy that once characterized the South American Republics. .Such extremists are not progressives; they are political emotionalists or neurotics."

This was nothing less than a direct assault upon Roosevelt for his utterances in his Colorado and Ossawatomie speeches. Coming as it did at the critical moment when Roosevelt was considering the question of consenting to be

a candidate, its effect was decisive. It removed from his mind the last lingering doubt as to the irreconcilable difference on matters of principle which existed between himself and Mr. Taft, and as to his duty to become a candidate against him. To his mind, Mr. Taft's words were not only an assault but a challenge, for never before in his career and never afterwards were more offensive epithets than "political emotionalist" and "neurotic" applied to him. If Mr. Taft had designed to goad him into acceptance of